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F. E. Abbot,
from E. C.
Nov. 6, 1880.

THE LILIAD

By Dr. Edward Curtis

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ΚΥΚΛΟΥΚΕΙΑ.

THE LILIAD;

AN EPIC EPISODE OF WAVE-CREST

(Rockaway Kuklux)

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, Θεα, Ῥοχαουαικοῦ Κύκλουκος
Οὐλομένην—

SEPTEMBER 11, 1880

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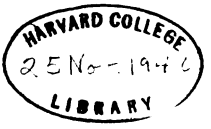

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THE LILIAD

AN EPIC DRAMA IN ONE ACT WITH TWO MOTIONS

MOTION I.—DOWN.

The Spectral Yacht.—The Invasion.—The Seizure.—The Charge.—The Trial.—The Doom.—The Valley of The Shadow of Death.

MOTION II.—UP.

The Rescue.—The Appeal.—The Reprieve.—The Commutation.—The Pardon.—The Return.—The Bosom of the Klan.

CHARACTERS:

LILY DICK, A Renegade.
CHARLES, A Novice.
ABSTRACT JUSTICE PERSONIFIED.
CAPTAIN OF THE KU-KLUX-KLAN.
FIRST-LIEUTENANT " "
SECOND " " "
HEADSMAN " "
Other Ku-Klux.

SCENE.—Without and within the Ancient Mansion of Wave-Crest-on-the-Inlet.

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THE LILIAD.

A warm September eve falls on the lonely Mansion; gentle Notus softly kisses the placid waters; the young and tender Moon looks coyly down, and All is Still. Noiselessly from the shadowy east a white-winged yacht dimly looms. She approaches, and suddenly about her decks lurid fires burn, half disclosing veiled and hooded forms, from whom, in muffled tones, is wafted this

Choral Prologue:—BARCAROLE.

(*Air*: "Over the Bright Blue Sea."—*Pinafore.*)

I.

The Ku-Klux (singing as they sail):—

Over the darkling wave
Come we brotherly-banded Ku-Klux, brave:
Beneath the moonlight pale
White, white, our flowing vestments trail!
Dim o'er the shadowy sea
Gleam the sheeted Ku-Klux, sailing free;

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Ghostly, in raiment wan,
Loom the masked and mystic Ku-Klux-Klan!

II.

Flaunting the moon's pale beams
Far-outflaring, the torchlight, lurid, gleams!
Where'er we, vengeful, go,
Red, red, the lambent flamelets glow!
Weird o'er the fire-lit sea
Gleam the sheeted Ku-Klux, sailing free;
Ghostly, in spectral van,
Loom the masked and mystic Ku-Klux-Klan!

The stately yacht sweeps to the landing: the mysterious host debark, and marching with stern and measured tread into the Mansion, disclose the Ku-Klux, masked and armed, leading Justice, blindfold, and bearing her classic Sword and Scales. They form in semicircle around Justice, the Captain, with death's-head mask, bearing a sword, the Headsman, an axe, noose, pistol and poison-cup, and the rest, knives. With grim and ghastly mien they announce their name and mission:—

I. *Choral.*—INTRODUCTION.

(*Air:* "Conspirators' Chorus."—*Fille de Mme. Angot.*)

I.

The Ku-Klux:—

We're the dreaded Ku-Klux of Rockaway;
And we warn all you folks we'll have our prey'

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We're a band of ruffians, in vengeful mood,—
Fierce ragamuffians athirst for blood !
On cruel murder we fondly doat—
Don't speak a word or I'll cut your throat !
So then you'd better, without delay,
Mind to the letter what we say !

II.

Justice :—

I am Abstract Justice Personified !
For observe, now, thus 't is I'm panoplied ;—
I've a sword full warranted of triple plate,
And balance guaranteed quite accurate !
In all official relations blind,
Highly judicial my frame of mind !
So, then, in martial and striking pose
Justice impartial I now disclose !

Justice (speaks):—

And now, Ku-Klux of Rockaway,
Perhaps you'll condescend to say
Why 't is that you insist that I,
Rigged out in all this toggery,
Should leave my long-enjoyed seclusion,
And join you in this strange intrusion.
Declare, then, now, what doth it mean,

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This mystical, dramatic scene,—
This home invaded, all unasked,
By sombre forms, mysterious, masked?

Captain :—

O very capital Personification of a highly respectable Abstract Principle, know that to-night we have a little trial afoot,—a renegade from our own band to be tried for desertion,—and have been in search of a Judge to conduct the same. But all duly appointed Justices being unavailable,—some being on vacation, others on crutches, and others on a spree,—we have been obliged, unwillingly, O very successful Impersonation, to call upon you as a last resort. May we ask you, therefore, to kindly take the bench and conduct this trial for us, assuring you that your salary shall be promptly paid for the time occupied, and your travelling expenses duly allowed for at a fair mileage.

Regretting, O most distinguished Ideal, to find you so unexpectedly scaly and sword-ed,

I yet remain, with profound respect,
Your most obedient servant,
THE CAPTAIN OF THE KU-KLUX-KLAN.

P. S. Excuse bad spelling, but my pen was bad.

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Justice :—

Enough, 't is well ; it is agreed :
Let, then, the trial now proceed !
A jury ye must first impanel—
So summon Jack, and Dick, and Daniel !

(*Captain impanels the jury.*)

Justice :—

Now let the prisoner appear,
Then silent, all, th' indictment hear.

Captain (to Lieutenants) :—

Ho, minions, seize the renegade, and bring her to the bar of justice !

(*Second Lieutenant and Headsman seize Lily, manacle and bring her forward.*)

Captain (to First Lieutenant) :—

Now, clerk of the Ku-Klux, read the indictment.

II. *Song and Chorus :*—THE INDICTMENT.

(*Air :* "Old Folks at Home.")

I.

1st Lieutenant :—

Way off upon a sand-bluff, hilly,
Far, far away,

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Dwells there a maiden known as Lily—
Lily, so blithe and gay.
(*K.-K. repeat.*)
Full of life as colt or filly,
First at romp or play,
Brave leader of our band was Lily,
Belle of Far Rockaway!

II.

But, recently, a new alliance,
Formed on the sly,
Leads her to put us at defiance,
Really we don't know why.
But we find, with hearts so chilly,
That, day after day,
Our former boon-companion, Lily,
Shuns all Far Rockaway:

III.

Yes, lives she now apart and moony,
Wrapt up in him:
Ne'er see we more that damsel, spoony,
Nor yet that young man, slim.
Oh, behavior, sad and silly!
Who, then, dares gainsay

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Such conduct on the part of Lily
Merits an exposé!

IV.

Then calmly, and without excitement,
Duly we swear
This solemnly preferred indictment
'Gainst this, our prisoner fair!
Here beneath the starlight stilly,
Charge we you this day,
False, false thou art, oh faithless Lily,
False to Far Rockaway!

Justice:—

Now, prisoner, give the Court your heed:
Guilty or not? How dost thou plead?

(*Lily pleads.*)

Justice:—

'Tis well: and now, ye who accuse,
Your witnesses forthwith produce.

(*Captain summons witnesses and tries his case, announcing at last:*)

Captain:—

And so, may it please your honor, we rest.

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Justice :—

Now, prisoner, put in your defence :
We're ready for your evidence !

(*Lily makes her defence.*)

Justice :—

Now silence, all ! The case is closed.
The witnesses have preached and prosed,
And naught remains but that the Judge
Eschewing rhetoric and fudge,
And fearless, quite, of Ku-Klux fury,
Should, unbiased, charge the Jury !

So, Jurymen of Rockaway,
Now hearken well to what I say !
We have here, gentlemen, a case
Where what the accusing party says
Is quite denied by the accused
(I hope you do not get confused !) :
This being so, quite naturally,
Conflicting statements do not tally ;
So, then, if what one says be true,
The contrary can't be so, too
(I trust I make this very clear ;
If not, just say so—never fear !) :

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Well, this being granted, then you see
That these two parties don't agree.
To settle which contention funny,
You must review the testimony.
And now, in weighing evidence,
You'll use your own innate good sense ;
What you remember, you'll recall,
And what you don't, you wont at all ;
Whate'er be true you will receive ;
And what is false, you'll not believe.
Thus you'll not find it difficult
To reach a quite profound result.

Next as regards the legal questions,
I'll offer you a few suggestions.
Know first (unless you knew 't before),
That what's enacted is the law ;
That every statute stands in force
Until it is repealed—of course :
Provided there be no decisions
Which contravene its plain provisions ;
Provided, too,—this first of all,—
'T is not unconstitutional.
Next, though it hardly needs reminding,
Observe that, though a law be binding,

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Its meaning rests upon citations
And various interpretations
Which, indexed and well codified,
With annotations amplified
Make clear the sense of every clause
And thus determine all the laws.
You see, then, that 'most anybody,
After, say, ten years of study,
Can always tell, in any case,
Just what it is the statute says.

Now, as regards the case before you
(I really hope I do not bore you),
'T is one in which it is alleged
That this young prisoner, sworn and pledged
A member of the Ku-Klux host,
Did, knowingly, desert her post.
I find, consulting now the law
(Chapter four hundred forty-four),
'T is ruled,—and with no contraversion,—
That who deserts, commits desertion.
Should you, then, hold it to be fact
That this fair prisoner did so act,
And just as the Ku-Klux assert,
Did, knowingly, in truth, desert,

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Why, then, you may, without aspersion,
Bring in a verdict of desertion.
But should you, on the other hand,
Find that she never left the band,
Why, then, that alters all the case!
The statute then quite plainly says
(See rendering of Justice Jones
In case of Banjo *vs.* Bones)—
The statute says—and we're agreed—
That whoso never did a deed,
Nor ever had the least intent,
Is, thereof, wholly innocent;
And, furthermore, that innocence,
Established by the evidence,
Entitles that—whate'er the plea—
The verdict should "not guilty" be.

Thus with the statutes well defined
And clearly brought before your mind,
I leave the matter in your hands
As custom and the law demands.
Consult ye, then, and do not think
To sleep, or eat, or even drink,
Or see your wives or babies tender,
Until your verdict you do render.

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But if ye've had experience,
And all are men of sound, good sense
You will agree, without delay,
By following this simple way:
First state your views, if you have any,
Then settle all by toss of penny!

(*Jury consults: foreman announces that they are agreed.*)

Justice:—

O prisoner, look upon the jury!
O Ku-Klux, now restrain your fury!
O foreman, speak: declare with haste,
Guilty or not? which is't thou sayst?

Foreman:—

Guilty!

Justice:—

O prisoner fair, of tender years,
Know that a jury of thy peers
Has found thee, without much exertion,
Guilty of most base desertion!
Come forward, then, unhappy wight,
And face me in the glimmering light,
While I now, in the people's name,
The solemn sentence do proclaim.

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Know that the law distinctly saith
That who deserts shall suffer death :
Then heed thee well : condemned hereby,
Thine be the dreadful doom—to die !
And now, O masked and mystic band,
Take ye your prisoner from my hand !
Tried and convicted without flaw,
'Tis yours to execute the law ;
Choose ye the manner and the time
When she shall expiate her crime ;
Then let the belfries mournful toll,
And heaven have mercy on her soul !

Captain :—

Time ? No time like the present ! Manner ? Who cares, so she die ! What—ho, then, headsman, advance and do thine office !

(*Headsman advances with solemn step, bearing his axe.*)

III. *Executioner's Song and Chorus.*

(*Air :*—"Ihr Brüder, wenn ich nicht mehr trinke," and "Tramp, tramp, tramp.")

I.

Headsman :—

Fair prisoner, not without compunction
Do I announce, with bated breath,

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That 't is now my grim and ghastly function
To put you to a frightful death !
So, then, if you have no objection,
While all here present turn their backs,
I will, without a hair's deflexion,
Strike off your head with this fell axe !

Ku-Klux :—

Axe, axe, axe, the fatal axe !
Dealing, O such awful whacks !
And what a funny trick
To behead our Lily Dick
With a dreadful dull and very jagged axe !

II.

Headsman :—

Or stay, if this seem too terrific,
I'd just as lief, if you prefer,
Do the job in manner scientific,
With this time-honored hanging gear !

(*Preparing noose.*)

So then, undoing every tangle,
I'll fix the slip-knot so, you see,
And high as Haman you shall dangle
Aloft upon an apple-tree !

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Ku-Klux :—

Tree, tree, tree, an apple-tree !
Oh, how jolly that will be !
And what a funny trick
For to hang our Lily Dick
High aloft upon a sour apple-tree !

III.

Headsman :—

Yet again, if you're averse to hanging,
I really do not care a jot ;
I can fix you with a pistol's banging,
Perchance e'en with a single shot !

(*Takes pistol.*)

Then steady now, and do not tremble,
Nor even dare to wink at all,
While I send crashing through your temple,
A red-hot two-ounce leaden ball !

Ku-Klux :—

Ball, ball, ball, a leaden ball !
Steady, do not wink at all !
And what a funny trick
For to shoot our Lily Dick
With a pretty, dainty, little leaden ball !

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IV.

Headsman :—

Yet, perhaps, 't is most aristocratic,
To die by cup of poison quaffed :
And, calmly, in a style Socratic
To sit and sip the fatal draught !

(*Takes goblet.*)

Then quick, now, while I'm in the notion,
Take this, nor think ye to refuse ;
And to the dregs drain down the potion,
The deadly spotted hemlock-juice !

Ku-Klux :—

Juice, juice, juice, the hemlock-juice,
No, no longer can she choose :
Then bolt it very quick,
O unhappy Lily Dick,
Bolt the bitter, deadly, spotted hemlock-juice !

(*As Lily is about to drink, the two Lieutenants suddenly rush forward upon her : one dashes the cup from her hand, the other quickly undoes the noose still hanging about her neck. Then they defiantly turn and oppose themselves between Lily and the Headsman.*)

Captain (indignantly) :—

What means this unseemly interruption ? Who dares oppose my authority ?

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Headsman (furiously) :—

And who dares come between me and my victim?
Away, or beware my axe!

Justice (calmly) :—

Peace, furious men! Your passions quell!
Perchance yon lads have aught to tell:
What recks a passing, brief delay?
Hold, then, and hark to what they say!

(*The Lieutenants pleadingly address the Headsman and Ku-Klux.*)

IV. *Scena* :—LIEUTENANTS AND HEADSMAN.

(*Air:* "Solo Profugo Rejetto."—*Martha.*)

I.

1*st Lieutenant* :—

From the days of earliest childhood
We have known poor Lily D.;
O'er the sands and through the wild wood
Oft we've strayed in merry glee.

Both Lieutenants :—

So, our stony hearts relenting,
We would plead, ere 't is too late,
That, her wayward course repenting,
She be spared this dreadful fate!

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(*The Ku-Klux seem to consult, and shake their heads ominously. Headsman advances sternly.*)

Headsman :—

No,—condemned by judge and jury,
Naught but death can now atone :
Think ye not to foil my fury—
Grim, the headsman, claims his own !

(*Lieutenants seize his arm : he shakes them off.*)

No, no, no, in vain your praying :
Tears and pleadings I defy !
She is doomed ! No more delaying !
Let the dastard traitor die !

(*Whirls his axe.*)

(*Second Lieutenant throws herself on Headsman ; seizing his arm, they struggle : First Lieutenant rushes wildly to Justice.*)

II.

1*st Lieutenant* :—

Mighty Justice, power eternal !
Lo, to thee 't is now we pray ;
Stretch thy hand in might supernal ;
Speak one word,—this slaughter stay !

Both Lieutenants (kneeling) :—

At thy feet behold us kneeling

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Heed, oh, heed our earnest prayer!
Let not vain be our appealing:
Save, O save yon hapless fair!

Justice:—

O dread Ku-Klux of Rockaway,
Now hearken ye to what I say!
The child speaks well: it is but right
That this unhappy erring wight
Should have the offer to repent.
Let then your stony hearts relent;
Declare what penance, or what fine,
Or other punishment condign,
Ye will accept, with her repentance,
For commutation of her sentence.
So shall your noble brotherhood
Be spared from ghastly scenes of blood!

(*The Ku-Klux gather together and seem to be secretly consulting.*)

1*st Lieutenant* (eagerly):—
I have it! Listen!

V. *Song and Chorus:*—First Lieutenant.

(*Air:* "Coming through the rye.")

I.

1*st Lieutenant:*—
If our Lily be not silly

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She'll no longer cry ;
If repentance light the sentence
Why should Lily die ?
Let her then, in accents hearty,
Swear her fealty true ;
And then for penance give a party,
Dance and music too !

All :—

Let her then, etc.

II.

If our Lily, willy-nilly,
Give a famous spree ;
If the dancing prove entrancing
Pardoned shall she be !
Let us, then, extend our mercy,
On these terms agreed ;
And all Long Island, all New Jersey,
Shall applaud the deed !

All :—

Let us then, etc.

Justice :—

O prisoner, thou hast heard hereby

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The terms on which to live or die !
Decide, then, quick ! Uplift thy voice,
And once for all declare thy choice !

(*Lily elects to live—The Ku-Klux rush at her with a wild yell—Headsman strikes off the manacles and drags forward Charles—Captain takes their hands, and the rest form a ring around the group.*)

VI. *Song and Chorus* :—CAPTAIN.

(*Air* : "Rally round the flag.")

I.

Captain :—

Now return ye, Lily Dick,
To the bosom of your clan !

Ku-Klux :—

So, so, a welcome to our Lily !

Captain :—

But yet promise very quick
You will ne'er desert again !

Ku-Klux :—

Say, say, you'll never be so silly !

All :—

Loyal forever,
True to the clan,
Swear you will never

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Leave us again !
Then we'll rally, double quick,
Round our long-lost Lily Dick,
Shouting a three-times-three for Lily !

II.

Captain :—

Then whatever be your lot
Ne'er forget your early friends—

Ku-Klux :—

No, no, oh, never be so silly !

Captain :—

When you tie the wedding-knot
Let them hang on by the ends,

Ku-Klux :—

Yes, yes, we can't give up our Lily !

All :—

Loyal forever, etc.

Justice :—

And now, since joyful ends the scene,
And hearts are gladsome and serene,
O children, pardon if I ask,

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But wherefore longer wear the mask ?
All now are friends ; be therefore wise ;
Doff your uncomfortable guise ;
Let Dicks and Cheevers freely mingle,
And nimble tongues, like clappers, jingle !

(*They form, as in the "Introduction."*)

VII. *Choral Farewell.*

(*Air :* "Conspirators' Chorus."—*Fille de Mme. Angot.*)

All :—

Thus we gentle Ku-Klux of Rockaway
Announce to you folks without delay,
That having now quite done our task,
We'll make a bow, slight, then unmask.
(*They unmask.*)

Thus with grimaces, in grotesque pose,
Our pretty faces we now disclose !
With expedition we doff the gown ;
(*Unrobing.*)

Then with permission we will sit down.

(*They quietly seat themselves, here and there, and begin talking to their neighbors as if just arrived on a friendly visit.*)

END.

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IMPROMPTU EPILOGUE.

—γλαυκῶπις Λίλεια.

Synopsis (*for details consult the memories of the epiloguers*):

Real fun and sham pain—Ice-cream and high-screen—Kisses and misses—Plighting and knighting: "Arise, Sir Charles, Fourteenth Lieutenant of the Ku-Klux-Klan, and be thine arms

A LILY OF SILVER ON A FIELD OF GOULD!"

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